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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [PINR](#) [CD](#) [CT](#) [SU](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH STRESS REGIONAL FALL-OUT OF DARFUR, PLEAD
FOR CROSS-BORDER MANDATE TO PROTECT REFUGEE CAMPS

REF: A. PARIS 7177

[1](#)B. PARIS 846

[1](#)C. HOTR P210908Z NOV 06

Classified By: Ambassador Craig R. Stapleton. Reasons 1.4b,d

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Special Envoy for Sudan Natsios and Ambassador Stapleton met on November 18 with French Presidential Africa Counselor Bonnetcorse and MFA/AF A/S-Equivalent de Gliniasty. Bonnetcorse stressed French concern at the regional fallout of the Darfur catastrophe. The Sudanese program of ethnic cleansing in Darfur now foreshadowed the forced migration of the non-Arab Black populations into the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad. Bonnetcorse confided that France was transferring additional forces into the Central African Republic (CAR) to backstop an imminent military campaign by FOMUC forces to retake townships lost to rebels in northern CAR. Bonnetcorse warned that anti-Deby campaigns launched from Darfur risked toppling the Chadian leader. He reproached the Addis Ababa consultations for failing to provide for cross-border security as part of the mandate of any AU-UN hybrid force. Bonnetcorse and Gliniasty warned that France could intervene to help protect refugee camps only if afforded some form of international legitimacy in terms of operating in concert with international cross-border monitors. Concerning the AU-UN hybrid force, Bonnetcorse doubted its efficacy and voiced some skepticism regarding financing via the UN scale of assessments; France and U.S. should jointly demand broader burden-sharing, notably by the Arab League, he said, and should link UN financing to the concession of some kind of UN chain of command. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios and Ambassador Craig R. Stapleton met on November 18 with Michel de Bonnetcorse, Counselor to President Chirac for African Affairs. Deputy Presidential Africa Counselor Jacques Champagne de Labriolle and MFA AF A/S-Equivalent Jean de Gliniasty also took part, together with AF/SE COS Andrew Steinfeld and Embassy Paris Africa Watcher.

[1](#)3. (C) Bonnetcorse observed that France and the United States shared common goals and a similar analysis of the Darfur situation. He judged the outcome of the Addis Ababa consultations on Darfur to be more or less satisfactory, although he afterward criticized the conference's treatment of border security (para 10 below). Bonnetcorse stated that he had two abiding preoccupations: 1) whether Darfur rebels could reach a common position that would facilitate real negotiations, and 2) the modalities for deployment of an AU-UN hybrid force.

14. (C) Bonnecorse noted that his talking points called for designation of a "democratic SLM leader;" he sneered at invoking the epithet of "democratic" in the context of a Darfur leader, but he stressed the self-evident need for the emergence of authoritative leadership. Bonnecorse questioned whether an AU-UN hybrid force would be effective. If composed mainly of African troops, then, he quipped, it would exhibit African efficiency. Bonnecorse said the AU-UN hybrid was essentially a face-saving device for the West, after the deadlock over UNSCR 1706 caused by GoS refusal to accept UN rehatting of AMIS. France raised questions about financing an AU-UN hybrid force by applying the UN scale of assessments; such a hybrid force would be a novelty and an innovative approach to funding was more appropriate. Bonnecorse advocated burden-sharing by the Arab League.

Regional Fallout, Need for Containment on Darfur

15. (C) The regional fallout of the Darfur crisis loomed large in French thinking, Bonnecorse stated. France, he thought, could also provide maximum assistance in terms of the regional crisis. French forces in Chad had a mandate to defend against external threats to Chad; originally, these were Libyan in character, but now the threats stemmed from Sudan. Bonnecorse stated that France would protect Deby insofar as he represented the internationally recognized leadership of Chad and because he had a relative claim to some sort of democratic investiture. Above all, France would stand by Deby for want of any credible successor, as Bonnecorse noted he had conveyed to former Deputy Secretary Zoellick (Refs A, B).

16. (C) Deby's staying power was unclear, but, with sixteen
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years at the helm, he had already beaten the national record for Chadian leaders, Bonnecorse quipped. That said, France recognizes that Deby's tribal group only accounts for 3 percent of Chad's population, with more than half of his own tribe now in the opposition. There were now three or four rebel groups, fielding some 10,000-12,000 armed rebels. Bonnecorse anticipated successive waves of rebel attacks, with Deby inevitably succumbing in the end. The Sudanese were fanning the anti-Deby rebellion. However, most rebels -- about two-thirds, he estimated -- were Chadian nationals, and the French military had clear instructions not to fire on Chadians. The French military would provide "moderate" support to Deby, Bonnecorse declared, and would take action to oppose external aggression, as appropriate, and to prevent the fall of N'djamena.

17. (C) Deby was now acting in the mode of a warlord, rather than a president, Bonnecorse asserted. Talk of fostering a political dialogue with the opposition was, "frankly, completely unrealistic," Bonnecorse said, referring to his October 20 conversation with U.S. Ambassador to Chad Marc Wall (Ref A). Among Deby's opponents, Mahamat Nouri was now in pole position, his chief advantage being that he was not Zaghawa but Goran, and also enjoyed the fealty of numerous smaller groupings, including the Chadian ethnic group known as "Arabs."

French to Help Repulse CAR Rebels

18. (C) Bonnecorse warned that a next step in the Sudanese plan for ethnic cleansing would be to expel or provoke the migration of the non-Arabic, black Darfur population into the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad. Sudanese had infiltrated northern CAR from Darfur with a mission to pave the way for the flight of the black Darfur population. The FACA, the CAR military, was virtually non-existent, unable to offer any resistance. CAR President Bozize had requested French military assistance and France would now engage in support of FOMUC forces. The French would form the backbone

of a military intervention in Northern CAR, Bonnecorse said, but they needed the cover of an African flag, hence the FOMUC mission (Ref C). Bonnecorse confided that France would act imminently, "next week," in order to take back Birao and other townships recently seized by rebels in Northern CAR. France was transferring additional military forces to CAR, he said. The French aim was to shock the CAR rebels and cause them to rethink their agenda.

Addressing Cross-Border Violence from Sudan

¶9. (C) SE Natsios asked Bonnecorse to what extent he attributed border violence to the GoS proper. Bonnecorse replied that Sudan provided safe haven for the preparation and launching of attacks against Deby. Sudan provided logistic support, notably petrol but also weaponry and equipment. President Bashir, however, was not necessarily implicated, Bonnecorse suggested. That said, without some form of Sudanese complicity, the conflict targeting Deby would never have gained such momentum. Libya was also contributing to the problem, delivering military hardware destined ostensibly for Chad, but with more than two-thirds actually diverted into Darfur.

¶10. (C) Bonnecorse regretted that the Addis Ababa consultations on Darfur had failed to devote sufficient attention to international deployment along the Darfur-Chad-CAR frontier. Bozize had made an explicit request. Deby, for his part, would accept an international presence if France and the U.S. jointly made the request. Securing the borders with Darfur would require between 3,000-4,000 troops deployed at 3 or 4 key positions, Bonnecorse said.

¶11. (C) MFA AF A/S-Equivalent de Gliniasty, who had also attended the Addis Ababa consultations, voiced disappointment that the U.S. and UK, in his view, had only paid lip-service to the cross-border dimension of the Darfur problem, thereby forcing Gliniasty to take on Sudan all alone on the matter. By contrast, representatives from the EU, South Africa, Libya and Egypt had been more supportive. At the least, France needed some reference, however ambiguous, to a cross-border force.

¶12. (C) SE Natsios replied that the U.S. wanted to

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reinforce SYG Annan's hand during the remainder of his UN tenure. Annan in Addis Ababa had wanted to focus primarily on Darfur, not the cross-border situation, which he intended to address instead through the dispatch of two assessment missions to the region. SE Natsios emphasized to Gliniasty that the USG did indeed recognize the cross-border dimension of the Darfur catastrophe and equally wanted to avert chaos in Chad. The goal in Addis Ababa, he reminded Gliniasty, was to break the deadlock on deployment of peacekeepers to Darfur. Gliniasty countered that SCR 1706 had carved out space for cross-border deployment, as part and parcel of the Darfur mission. Bonnecorse commented that without help in preventing cross-border attacks, there was a real risk of Deby's imminent collapse, which he noted dryly would be a great Christmas present for Bashir. It was imperative, Bonnecorse reiterated, to institute "a policy of containment" for the violence originating from Sudan.

Threat to Refugee Camps

¶13. (C) SE Natsios noted evidence of a resurgence in Sudan of Arab supremacists, who could move to shut down IDP and refugee camps. These hardliners, who were affiliated with a movement known as the Arab Gathering, were layered throughout the Sudanese administration. Their vocabulary included phrases like extermination with reference to the Darfur black populace. SE Natsios warned, if U.S. intelligence proved

valid, the refugee camps in Chad could be targets for large-scale attacks. How would France respond? Would France intervene to defend the camps?

Conditions for French Intervention

¶14. (C) In the event of attacks against the refugee camps in Chad, Bonnetcorse said France would aim to reinforce an intervention by others, whether African or AU-UN hybrid forces. For that reason, the mandate for the AU-UN hybrid force had to be broad enough to encompass action related to cross-border violence. Gliniasty chimed in to emphasize that only international monitoring could establish the legitimacy necessary for international intervention. Bonnetcorse echoed the need for juridical foundations for a response. He regretted there had been no mention of the 10 February 2006 Tripoli Agreement in the Addis Ababa declaration, because Tripoli had set forth the parameters of an international African monitoring force on the Darfur border. Without the cover of an internationally sanctioned cross-border force, however insubstantial, the French reaction capability was undercut by a good 90 percent, Gliniasty opined.

¶15. (C) Returning to the question of finances for an AU-UN force, Bonnetcorse and Gliniasty said the price of UN financing had to be incorporation of a UN chain of command. Gliniasty said he had told FM Lam Akol to ask Bashir if he could accept inclusion of a UN strategic cell if there were an AU command structure. Lam Akol indicated consent, Gliniasty said. SE Natsios warned Lam Akol lacked the authority to commit Bashir. SE Natsios was supportive of the French concern about the command structure, but remarked that the U.S. did not wish to get in the way of SYG Annan's current initiative.

¶16. (C) EMBASSY COMMENT: This is the first time that the French have explicitly conditioned a French role in protection of refugee camps in Chad on an internationally sanctioned cross-border force or inclusion of border monitoring in the mandate of a Darfur force. The actual deployment of international cross-border elements counts less than the cover such would provide for French intervention. Presumably, even a skeletal FOMUC-type presence would suffice so long as it were operating under an international mandate that could guarantee so-called legitimacy for a French military response. END COMMENT.

¶17. (U) AF/SE COS Steinfeld has approved this message.

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